the Govenrment that the restriction imposed by the Sri Lankan Authorities mainly affected the traditional sailing vessels traffic from Tuticorin to Colombo.

(c) The Government had strongly taken up the issue with the Sri Lankan Government. The Sri Lankan Government has intimated that due to security reasons they are unable to permit access to Colombo port by sailing vessels to enter Colombo port. The Sri Lankan authorities have offered alternative facilities to the small sailing vessels at Mutwal fisheries harbour, in addition to Negombo, Beruwela and Galle ports. A small delegation, arranged by the Ministry of Surface Transport and including representatives of vessel owners associations in Tuticorin are scheduled to visit Sri Lanka for further discussions on ways to resolve the issue.

India's Nuclear Option

896. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the reaction of Government with regard to the recent nuclear test conducted by the French Government which is estimated to be five times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb;

(b) whether Government have considered the question of exercising its nuclear option to meet the country's security challenges with the continuous development and testing of nuclear deterrent by the major nuclear power countries and guess of going nuclear by Pakistan; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) In a statement issued on 15 September, Government expressed dismay over the recent nuclear tests and, *inter alia*, urged all countries to refrain from actions contrary to the objectives of the CTBT which is currently being negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva.

(b) and (c) The security situation of India is constantly under review, particularly in the light of developments in the neighbourhood and government will take all necessary measuress designed to cope with any threat that may be posed to the security of the nation.

PCOs in Delhi

897. SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of PCOs functioning in Delhi at present;

(b) what are the criteria followed for installation of PCOs;

(c) what are the reasons that sufficient PCOs are not installed on the roadside in the capital region;

(d) whether it is also a fact that some of the PCOs particularly outside Delhi Gate Telephone Exchange are locked at night thus preventing the telephone users from making distress telephone calls in emergency; and

(e) what steps Government are contemplating to ensure availability of sufficient PCOs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No. of PCOs working at present in Delhi are (as on 1-11-95) Local-19241 STD/ISD-3896.

(b) STD/ISD PCOs are provided to educated unemployed persons. For urban area the qualification is 10th Pass and for rural area, it is 8th Pass. Local Payphones are provided keeping in view the suitability and technical feasibility.

(c) Highways and other important roads falling within the jurisdiction of Delhi are reasonably covered by network or Payphones.

(d) Sir, specified minimum working